(a) whether Government have received proposals from Gujarat Government for conversion of MG/NG lines into BG ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) which MG/NG lines of Gujarat State are to be converted into BG lines during the Eighth Five Year Plan period and by when the remaining MG/NG lines are likely to be converted to BG lines ;

(d) by when the gauge conversion work of Rajkot-Veraval MG Railway line would be taken up; and

(e) by when the said work would be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Proposals have been received for conversion of the following lines :

1. Rajkot-Veraval
2. Gandhidham-Bhuj
3. Surendranagar-Bhavnagar
4. Dharangadhra-Kuda

(c) and (d) Conversion of Rajkot-Veravl MG railway line into BG has been included in the proposed Railway Budget 94-95. At present there is no proposal for conversion of the other lines.

(e) The work will progress as per availability of resources in the coming years.

Provision on the Budget for completion of Nadiad-Kapadvanj M.G. line

1233. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways have made very less provision in the budget for the year 1993-94 for Nadiad-Kapadvanj M. G. line and its extension up to Modasa (New B.G. lines);

(b) when this project was sanctioned and what are the reasons of slow progress in this section;

(c) whether Gujarat Government has requested the Central Government to allot sufficient funds for this project in the current year; and

(d) by when the remaining work would be completed in the above project ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 1978-79. Gauge conversion work has been completed. Work on construction of new lines from Kapadvanj to Modasa has not made significant progress due to low operational priority and constraint of resources.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) In the coming years as per availability of resources.

Metro Rail Project Calcutta

1234. SHRI ASHOK MITRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the magnitude of the economic, social and environmental losses to the citizens of Calcutta on account of the metro rail project being elongated beyond twenty years ;

(b) whether it is agreeable to set up an expert group to quantify these losses; and

(c) the nature of compensation, if any, Government are contemplating to offer to the people of Calcutta for the heavy economic and social cost they have incurred and are incurring on account of the project ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA) : (a) The delay in the Metro Railway Project, Calcutta beyond twenty years has been caused by various factors including considerable delay in getting possession of the site at various locations. However, most of these problems have now been resolved and the project is now progressing speedily and expected to be completed by December, 1995.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) There is no such proposal. However, the running of trains over an additional six block sections would be introduced during 1994-95

and the balance by 31-12-1995. The relief to the people of Calcutta by opening of Metro would more than compensate for their sufferings during the course of its execution.

Suggestions of Indian Road Congress

1235. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian Road Congress has been formulating any long-term strategy for improvement of roads and transport;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any of these suggestions have been accepted; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) to (d) Presumably, the Hon'ble Member is having in mind the 20-year Road Development Plans formulated by the I.R.C. (Indian Roads Congress). The 20-Year Road Development Plan (1981—2000), inter-alia envisages in construction/development of various classes of roads in the country aggregating to 27,00,000 Km. including 66,000 Km. of National Highways by the turn of the century. However, the suggestions contained in the document are only recommendary.

High Berthing Charges in Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour

1236. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what are the reasons for the high cost of berthing and other charges in Visakhapatnam fishery harbour.

(b) whether Government have taken any action with the concerned department to bring down the costs; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Berthing and other charges are decided with reference to the actual costs incurred on the services provided to the fishing boats/trawlers, by the Port.

(b) and (c) The Visakhapatnam Port Trust have sent a proposal for revising the existing rates of fishing trawlers from per day rates to monthly basis. The matter is under examination.

Increasing number of road accidents

1237. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether road safety is not being given sufficient emphasis and importance by Government;

(b) what are the reasons for the inability of government to control the increasing number of accidents, and

(c) whether any innovative measures are proposed in 1994-95; if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) to (c) The Government is taking all possible steps to control road accidents. For this purposse, a special Cell has been created in the Ministry of Surface Transport and a National Road Safety Council has also been constituted. The road accidents are caused due to various factors and cannot be attributed only to lack of measures on the part of Government or other agencies. The State Transport and Police Departments have been taking various steps including awareness campaigns to check road accidents and these measures will continue to be taken in future also. The Central Government also provides financial assistance to the State Governments for strengthening their awareness/publicity campaigns. The Government have also provided driver training simulators to four States and proposals to provide some vehicle testing equipments, portable weigh bridges as part of its efforts to check road accidents. Besides, the State Governments have also been requested to set up Committees at the State and District levels in terms of Section 215 of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988.